

Resources Subcommittee on Parks, Forests and Lands Chairman JAMES HANSEN, legislation to authorize both the acquisition of Sterling Forest and the Snow Basin land exchange.

The dense woodlands, undisturbed meadows, majestic ridgetops, and clear water of Sterling Forest comprise a resource area of incomparable value to the public. Located just 35 miles from New York City and within 1 hour's drive for 1 in 10 Americans, these lands host a broad array of unusual biological communities and are home to scores of sensitive wildlife species including the American bald eagle. Sterling Forest also contains a major portion of the Appalachian Trail, which traverses the property's northern reaches offering remarkable scenic vistas and recreation opportunities.

Most importantly, this undisturbed, undeveloped acreage is a major portion of the watershed for the reservoirs that provide the household water to 25 percent of all residents in my State. To maintain the high quality of these waters and to safeguard this diversity of resources, public acquisition of Sterling Forest has been a widely recognized priority for many years; and, in fact, some portions of the property have already been acquired.

My interest in protecting the forest goes back to my days as a Passaic County Freeholder, where in 1993 I supported the Passaic County acquisition of 2,076 acres of Sterling Forest in West Milford and Ringwood, NJ. The purchase followed a 5-year condemnation battle for the property.

The owners of the remainder of Sterling Forest recently agreed to sell to the public the vast majority of the property—including all of the most critical watershed, natural, and recreation lands. This agreement truly presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, but this opportunity will not last. Unless the more than 15,000 acres being offered can be purchased within 2 years, the owners will proceed with plans to build many thousands of homes and millions of square feet of office and commercial space on Sterling Forest, forever impairing Sterling Forest's natural resources and character, and putting at risk the quality of water consumed by millions of New Jersey residents. And the price tag for the purchase—\$55 million—is formidable.

Fortunately, an innovative partnership strategy has been developed to bring preservation of Sterling Forest within reach. The States of New Jersey and New York each have set aside \$10 million as their contributions toward the purchase. Private philanthropy has provided another \$7.5 million, and efforts are underway to attract significantly more charitable support for the acquisition. The linchpin in this funding partnership, though, is the proposed \$17.5 million Federal share. Without this help from the Federal Government, the acquisition of Sterling Forest will not be possible.

The House Appropriations Committee has recently responded to this need by affirming the high national priority of Sterling Forest protection, and by recommending first-year funding in the amount of \$9 million, or roughly half of the total Federal contribution to this 2-year project. It is important to note that Federal funds will be matched more than 2 to 1 by State and private dollars to complete the purchase. There will be no long-term Federal expense once the purchase is completed, since all management burdens will be assumed by

the Palisades Interstate Park Commission, a State agency.

Furthermore, this legislation offers a unique approach to the land protection opportunity for Sterling Forest. In addition to the direct authorization of \$17.5 million for the most environmentally sensitive portion of the forest—approximately 90 percent of the tract—the bill also includes a land swap option for the purchase of the remaining 10 percent of the property. I proposed such a land swap concept last Fall in my attempt to break the logjam that surrounded Sterling Forest legislation for several years. The new bill would direct the Secretary of the Interior to designate excess Federal lands to be sold in order to raise money beyond the \$17.5 million to fund the purchase of the additional 10 percent of the land, if that purchase were to be undertaken.

I want to emphasize that we only have a limited time to accomplish the task of protecting this critical and environmentally sensitive watershed. We are at a crucial juncture in our efforts on behalf of the millions of people who depend on Sterling Forest for clean and safe drinking water and for the solitude that it provides to one of this Nation's most densely populated areas.

Let us also not forget that the efforts to preserve Sterling Forest have been going on for several years to no avail. Even when Washington had a Democratic Congress, as well as a Democrat in the White House, the goal of acquiring Sterling Forest was never achieved. We now have a wonderful opportunity to meet this goal and I invite and encourage each and every Member of Congress to join us in this cause.

Sterling Forest is clearly an invaluable property, that will provide far-reaching public benefits that greatly exceed its costs. I ask my colleagues to join me, other members of the New Jersey and New York delegations, the Speaker, and the administration in supporting this effort.

THE CAMPAIGN FINANCE DEFORM ACT OF 1996

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 26, 1996

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, one of the glaring shortcomings of this Congress is the utter lack of serious interest from the majority leadership in reforming the broken campaign finance system.

Unfortunately, from the very beginning, the authors of this bill have clung to a series of concepts denounced by Common Cause as "phony," by Public Citizen as "fundamentally wrong," by business as "pandering," by labor as "a sellout" and which are, by any sensible standard, perversely bizarre.

The bill before us today is campaign finance deformed, not reformed.

It offers reelection protection to those with the richest friends.

It expands the ability of political elites to dominate elections with soft money.

And it drives a stake into the heart of grassroots activism by turning elections over to those who would, under this bill, control assets far beyond what they currently do.

That's what we're doing here today—voting on a bill carefully and skillfully constructed by

those whose guiding principle is a desire to pump more money in politics.

We should instead be imposing a tough new cap on contributions from political action committees and wealthy contributors.

We should instead be eliminating the soft money loopholes and making it less costly for the airwaves to be used for political discourse.

We should instead be promoting greater balance among candidates through a spending limit, especially in the absence of other methods.

Should, and could—but we aren't.

Instead, we're engaged in a determined exercise to block legitimate campaign finance reform. If you believe it's time to control spending, to reform soft money, and to reduce the influence special interests exert over elections, the best steps today along that path are to support the Farr substitute, and to defeat the campaign finance deformed bill offered by the majority leadership.

TRIBUTE TO THE KANSAS CITY METROPOLITAN LUTHERAN MINISTRY

HON. KAREN MCCARTHY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 26, 1996

Ms. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute Kansas City Metropolitan Lutheran Ministry [MLM] as it celebrates its 25th anniversary aiding the low-income and disadvantaged citizens of Greater Kansas City.

Metropolitan Lutheran Ministry plays a critical role in Greater Kansas City. MLM annually serves over 50,000 people in need, including 10,000 homeless people. These services instill dignity and self-respect in individuals. MLM brings strength to the community, helping citizens find jobs, transportation, and places for them to live. These selfless acts serve as a beacon of compassion and a glimmer of hope not only to those who benefit directly from them, but to all who live and work in the metropolitan area.

Annually the volunteers and staff bring holiday cheer to over 1,400 destitute families by providing them with gifts and the food for a holiday meal. In all, MLM will provide nearly 42,000 hours of volunteer service to those in difficult circumstances in the coming year. The Metropolitan Lutheran Ministry provides all of these services with a dedicated staff of 31 highly trained individuals and over 1,500 volunteers from the Greater Kansas City area.

MLM has set the standard for social service in Kansas City. Metropolitan Lutheran Ministry has helped to implement programs such as Harvesters Food Bank, the Community Gardens project, Project Warmth, as well as low to moderate-income housing programs such as Parvin Estates and Sheffield Place, which provides housing to homeless women with small children. These initiatives are at the core of the social service backbone of Kansas City.

MLM continues to produce new and important endeavors for the community. Most recently, they embarked on a child abuse prevention program to train and educate teachers, counselors, and the clergy about how to recognize abuse, how to intervene, and where to go for help. Last year this program reached out to 7,400 people and trained 500 people in 33 workshops.